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The Fate of China's Youth

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THE FATE OF CHINA'S YOUTH

Four years ago the youth of Communist China were caught up in a maelstrom of rebellion aimed at turning an entrenched governing bureaucracy on its head and remolding the nation's society and people. Under the banner of the Red Guard movement, youthful activists emerged as the spearhead of Mao Tse-tung's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and made a frontal attack on the educational system, harried much of the highest leadership, and spread political chaos throughout the land. Their activities captured the imagination of the Western press and of many "new left" student leaders outside China, who saw similarities between their movements and that of China's young militants.

The Red Guard movement, however, was only superficially a spontaneous outpouring of youthful discontent and unrest against the "establishment." In actual fact, the Red Guards were largely pawns in a great domestic political struggle over power and policy that was initiated not by the students but by the regime. The artificial and carefully structured growth of the Red Guard movement is no better illustrated than in its rather abrupt and conclusive official demise in the summer of 1968. The end of the usefulness of student activists as political instruments having been unmistakably demonstrated to the regime, it eventually rusticated hundreds of thousands of them for political "re-education" and reform through labor.

Because of the harsh repression they have suffered since 1968, China's students today are probably more cynical, apathetic, and disheartened than at any time since the Communists took power in 1949. Even though they did not rebel against the system entirely on their own initiative, China's students did have outstanding grievances and many of them willingly lent themselves to the Red Guard movement in the belief that it would rectify such ills as an inadequate educational system, shortage of job opportunities, and limited career mobility. All of these grievances are currently being dealt with by the regime but .. accordance with the conflicting imperatives of Maoist ideology and current political realities rather than in response to specific student demands. Thus, despite the fact that the regime continues to pay lip service to China's youth as Mao Tse-tung's "revolutionary successors," their influence on policy is nil and their succession is a long way off. In the meantime, barring another revolution from above, China's youth are likely to continue to express their discontent and dissatisfaction through the time-honored practice of passive resistance and foot-dragging rather than through direct assault on the establishment itself.

The Monkey Kings

"Revolutionaries are Monkey Kings, their golden rods are terrible, their supernatural powers far-reaching and their magic omnipotent, for they possess Mao Tse-tung's great invincible thought. We wield our golden rods, display our supernatural powers, and use our magic to turn the old world upside down, smash it to pieces, pulverize it, and create chaos—the greater confusion the better. We are bent on creating a tremendous proletarian uproar, and hewing out a proletarian new world!"

Red Guard Poster, 24 June 1966

Many "new left" student leaders in the West have noted similarities between their "movements" and those of the Red Guards who were the spearhead of China's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in 1966-68. Some parallels superficially are quite striking. The Red Guards appeared to be attacking the increasingly irrelevant and worn-out remnants of a used-up cultural tradition. They were fanatic and not open to appeals for compromise and reasoned adjustment. Their attack on the self-satisfied Communist bureaucracy that had grown up since 1949 appeared to reflect a deep-seated hatred of the twin evils of hypocrisy and inertia. Above all, the Red Guards believed that they were about to inherit the earth. And initially many militant Red Guard groups directed their ire specifically at the administrative apparatus of an educational system that did not seem capable of preparing them for the future that propaganda had assured them was to be theirs.

The Red Guard phenomenon, however, did not arise out of unfulfilled youthful expectations but out of internecine quarreling within the hierarchy. It was brought into existence and protected by the highest levels of a Chinese regime that had closed schools in the summer of 1966 precisely so that the students could "make revolution." The major targets of Red Guard attacks—entrenched party, government, and academic officials who were charged with resisting Mao's leadership—were chosen by the regime. The radical Red Guard leaders were in close communication with extremist colleagues of Mao in Peking and took their orders directly from them. In addition, as the Red Guard movement spread throughout China it was backed up by an elaborate logistics network supported by the state. The more important radical Red Guard groups also communicated with one another and with Peking over the state-run telegraph net. These activities could not have occurred without backing from the central authorities, and in this sense the Red Guard movement was an artificial—and in many ways highly structured—movement quite different from the student protests in the West and in some other Asian states.

The Revolutionary Tradition

To say that the Red Guard movement was wholly inspired and manipulated by the regime is not to deny Mao's genuine concern with cultivating "revolutionary successors" or to imply that political activism is alien to China's youth. Indeed, the modern Chinese revolution largely began with the famous student-inspired "May 4th" movement of 1919 that followed the overthrow of the Manchu dynasty. "May 4th"

represented the reaction of Chinese youth against traditional cultu. : and custom that had failed to adapt China to the modern world as symbolized, at that time, by the shabby treatment China received at the peace conference in Paris. It was no accident that the most influential journal of that period was called *New Youth* or that its editor, Ch'en Tu-hsiu, was one of the co-founders of the Chinese Communist Party.

The cultural system that came under attack in 1919 had always accorded a special place to the scholar. The imperial mandarinate was an administrative system peopled by a scholar-elite. The way to advancement was through study and examination, and the rewards frequently were great. Beyond material advantage, the educated man traditionally was accorded a position of honor in society. The pace of success, however, was very slow. Rewards and honor went to the old and aging while the young remained subordinate. Scholarship was devoted to quasi-Confucian ends bearing little relationship to the needs of the modern world.

The "May 4th" movement turned all this upside down: the youthful students who were the spearhead of the movement were exalted over their hidebound and repressive elders, and traditional concerns and attitudes were denounced in favor of the liberating influence of modern techniques and Western intellectual currents. "May 4th" was the fountainhead of both the Communist movement and the Chinese nationalist movement in its modern form, as well as the source point for most Chinese intellectual trends of this century.

The implications of this movement, however, really were not clear-cut, as they once seemed. Elderly scholars were denounced and derided—but by younger scholars. Modern Western intellectual fashions, including Marxism, flowed into China—but the Maoist version of Marxism, which in time became the new orthodoxy, contained a heavy infusion of notions derived from a romantic view of the traditional, peasant-based uprisings that had punctuated Chinese history. Above all, although Confucianism as an administrative and philosophic system was discarded, the ethical and cultural assumptions on which it rested in large degree survived. The specific gravity of a culture that had remained virtually intact for some three thousand years proved very high, and the consequences of this fact still are working themselves out.

One immediate result of the "May 4th" movement was to fuse the connection between students and politics. Youthful activists not only played a major part in mobilizing public opinion against "imperialism" in the early 1920s but were also prominent in the growth of the nationalist movement later in the decade. Student disenchantment with Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang was an important factor in the long duel between the Communists and the Chinese Nationalists. The idealistic fervor of these children's crusades continued to be important in the fluid politics of the 1920s, 30s, and 40s. It was much less so, however, after the Communist take-over in 1949.

The Legacy of Discontent

In its initial years, the stock of the new order among most of the politically conscious young people was extremely high. The achievements of Mao Tse-tung and his colleagues since the mid-1930s had indeed been remarkable. They had gone from one victory to another—they had unified China, fought the US to a draw in Korea, halted a runaway inflation, and put China on the road to economic development and modernizaton. These accomplishments gave the regime a mantle of invincibility, and young people were willing to accept its dictates at face value. Their optimism was also buoyed by the romantic incentive of serving social and political idealism that promised them participation in political action aimed at overcoming past weaknesses, such as an oppressive traditional social order, a fragmented political system, and an ineffective government.

As the years wore on, Chinese youth were presented with a series of disillusioning facts and unpalatable choices, and many lost their revolutionary elan. The students diminished as a political force and discovered that the Communists were as unsatisfactory from an idealistic point of view as the nationalists had been. By the eve of the Cultural Revolution, student discontent had built up to the point where many were eager to respond to the Maoists' cry that "there can be no construction without prior destruction."

China's educational facilities, for example, had expanded greatly since the Communist takeover in 1949, but they had not kept pace with a burgeoning population approaching over 800 million people—almost half of them under twenty-one. Competition for places in universities and colleges was keen, and even those who did manage to acquire education frequently found that they were still stymied. Meaningful jobs commensurate with educational level and skills were often not available, and any openings frequently involved transfer from the comparative comfort of the great cities of east and central China to remote and backward outposts. Moreover, the leadership that had taken power at the end of the civil war had not relinquished its stranglehold on middle and upper echelon jobs. As the queue for these grew longer, the waiting period grew more frustrating.

The problem of limited career mobility was made all the more acute because the regime very early on had deliberately fostered rising expectations by painting a glowing picture of a modern and powerful China to be built by the younger generation. University students naturally assumed that they were going to take their places as leaders and builders of the new society. Because the professional and technical specialists needed for modernization were in short supply, not all students found their hopes dashed. But the absurdities of Mao's Great Leap Forward in 1958-1959 and the consequent social and economic retrenchment in the early 1960s led to a decline in educational opportunities across the board; as a result, job opportunities were even further curtailed. The collapse of the leap forward forced the regime to renege on many of its golden promises and instead, to offer to much of the youth only long years of dour and unrewarding struggle. For many urban students, this meant banishment to the villages to provide mere manual labor in support of the post-leap efforts to step up agricultural development. To steel themselves for further sacrifices, the youth were told to emulate the very ordinary achievements of a model army hero, Lei Feng, who wrote:

> *"Some people call me an idiot. I want to do good deeds for the state and people. If they say I am an idiot, then I am willing to be one. The revolution needs voluntary idiots like me."*

Meanwhile, for those who remained in school, tensions also were high. This was partially a direct result of regime goals that in practice conflicted rather than complemented an attempt to modernize the country on the one hand and an attempt ideologically to remold Chinese society on the other. Mao had shown an awareness of these tensions, but his attempts to solve the problem before the Cultural Revolution exacerbated rather than relieved the situation.

In China, as elsewhere, education is the key to advancement—however long deferred. Many of those who were best qualified intellectually for higher education were interested merely in material rewards and perquisites that a modernizing society must pay to the relatively small group that has attained technical proficiency. "Careerism," cynical or otherwise, became increasingly prevalent as the first flush of revolutionary enthusiasm wore off. At the same time, however, the regime was strongly emphasizing that China's youth would soon inherit both the country and the Chinese Communist revolutionary tradition. Mao in particular was concerned lest tradition be diluted by an indifferent youth bent on pursuit of their careers. He insisted that peasant and working-class background be the prime consideration

in awarding places at institutions of higher learning.

Red Guard diatribes, even when discounted for polemical exaggeration, make it clear, however, that purely academic qualifications continued to play a part in the selection process after Mao's abortive attempt to lower educational standards during the Great Leap period. Stiff entrance requirements and difficult exams were reinstituted, allegedly against Mao's will, in an effort to raise the caliber of the students who were to become the technically qualified elite of the future. Thus, peasant and poor worker youths, told that they were China's "revolutionary successors" and uniquely fitted for this role by virtue of their backgrounds, found that the "class enemy" still was accorded preferment in the educational system. The hatred thus engendered boiled over in the early phases of the Cultural Revolution, when opposing student Red Guard groups broke down along class lines—particularly at the more prestigious universities where bourgeois students were numerous.

Red Guard Goals

The various frustrations, currents, and countercurrents faced by the youth before the Cultural Revolution were an explosive mixture, but it took a deliberate act on the part of the regime to ignite the fuse. Moreover, the Red Guard movement was never a unitary whole, and as the regime's revolution against itself ebbed and flowed, various Red Guard groups were employed as opposing political instruments both by the Maoists in Peking and by the civilian and army officials who were under attack. Insofar as Red groups of any persuasion could be said to have had a positive program, it was to acquire power by replacing disgraced former officials who had come to be regarded as symbols of the frustrating status quo. This ambition probably was confined to the leaders of the various Red Guard groups, but at all levels there was the hope that the log jam blocking the way to relatively rapid advancement could be broken. In retrospect, however, there was never much likelihood that Red Guards would secure an appreciable number of important positions.

Implicit in Red Guard attacks on "power holders" was the larger, less well-defined aim of purifying the system. Starting from the Maoist premise of the corrupting influence of "revisionism," the Red Guards tended to attribute their frustrations to the ideological mistakes of the "power holders." Nevertheless, the evils that they attacked—bureaucracy, routinization, specialization, and pragmatic devotion to efficiency at the expense of ideology—were all inevitable manifestations of the modernization process. The Red Guards' demand for purity was thus in effect a call for a primitive, utopian Communism—a call that echoed Mao Tse-tung's demand for a new generation of true believers who would dedicate themselves even more fervently to the Chinese Communist revolutionary tradition.

Because these romantic and idealistic strands in the Red Guard program were unrealizable, cynicism and "careerism," those objects of Red Guard scorn, tended to grow rather than diminish among the students. In many instances, the students' general hope for advancement degenerated into a cynical "what's-in-it-for-me" attitude. As inconclusive battles for power between Red Guard factions dragged on, more and more individuals opted out of the struggle entirely and refused to become committed to any side. Many became drifters living from hand to mouth, while others gravitated toward criminal activities.

The Fate of the Red Guards

The success of the Red Guards—and their mentors in Peking—in destroying the party apparatus during the Cultural Revolution meant that a power vacuum had to be filled to get the country running again. By 1968 it was clear that the vacuum would be filled by the army and that the fate of the Red Guard movement was sealed. The Red Guards themselves were incapable of supplanting the apparatus they had helped to

Propagandizing the Ideal

Model for Revolutionary Young People

Raised on Mao Tse-tung Thought, the twenty-year-old Red Guard Chin Hsun-hua grew to be a firm proletarian revolutionary.

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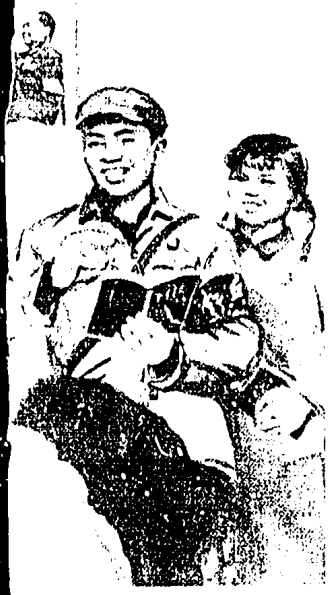
In 1966, as Chairman Mao lit the flames of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, Chin Hsun-hua bravely plunged into the battle to smash the bourgeois headquarters of the traitor Liu Shao-ch'i.

In 1968, Chairman Mao called on the young people
go to the countryside to be re-educated by the poo
peasants. As part of a study team, Chin Hsun-hu
Shanghai to visit Heilungkiang Province on the no
There he saw vast stretches of land waiting to be
became convinced that he should settle down in this



n-hua urged his sister to go to
vith him. Their mother thought
but he told her, "You worked
hen you were younger than she
vorry; we're doing what Chair-
ng to the border region to be
poor and lower-middle peas-
agreed.

Chin Hsun-Hua arrived in Heilungkiang in May 1969. He did everything in the revolutionary spirit of "fearing neither hardship nor death." Building a house, he got covered with mud from head to foot. Binding wheat, he was soaked with sweat. When people told him to rest, he answered, "The more I sweat, the less soft I'll be."

Chin Hsun-hua spread Mao Tse-tung Thought enthusiastically. Whenever a new instruction of Chairman Mao was published, he would cut a stencil, mimeograph it and take it around to the peasants. Once when he arrived at Aunt Sung's house, the family was already in bed. But they got up at once, lit a lamp and sat down to study it. The poor and lower-middle peasants' love for Chairman Mao taught Chin Hsun-hua a lot.

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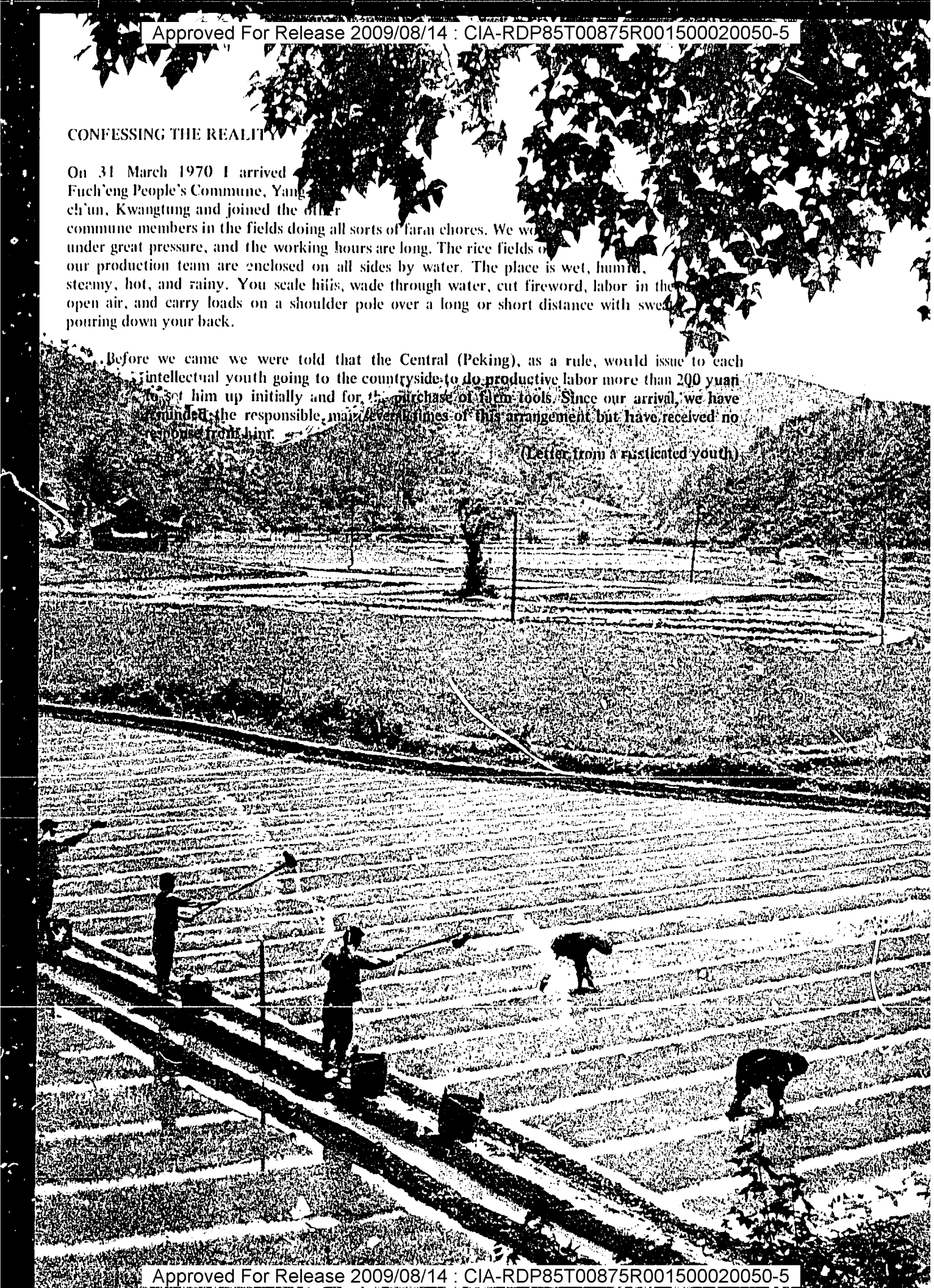
During a flood on August 15, 1969, several telephone poles on the river bank floated away. Chin Hsun-hua jumped into the raging waters to save the state's property. He lost his life in the battle, fulfilling his vow to "fight to the death for Chairman Mao."

"The lowly are most intelligent, while the elite are most ignorant."
Mao Tse-tung



CONFESSING THE REALITY

On 31 March 1970 I arrived [illegible] Fuch'eng People's Commune, Yang[illegible] ch'un, Kwangtung and joined the other commune members in the fields doing all sorts of farm chores. We work under great pressure, and the working hours are long. The rice fields of our production team are enclosed on all sides by water. The place is wet, humid, steamy, hot, and rainy. You scale hills, wade through water, cut fireword, labor in the open air, and carry loads on a shoulder pole over a long or short distance with sweat pouring down your back.

Before we came we were told that the Central (Peking), as a rule, would issue to each intellectual youth going to the countryside to do productive labor more than 200 yuan to set him up initially and for the purchase of farm tools. Since our arrival, we have reminded the responsible man several times of this arrangement but have received no response from him.

(Letter from a rusticated youth)

destroy, and it seems highly likely that Mao never intended them to play a major role in administering the country. He may well have regretted having to alienate the Red Guards whom he had hailed as "revolutionary successors," but once the regime finally decided that their usefulness as political instruments was over, it moved swiftly and cynically to repress them. Without so much as missing a turn, the enormous propaganda machinery put the nation on notice in August 1968 that the vanguard of the revolution was no longer the Red Guards but the more orthodox "worker/peasant proletariat."

Beginning in the late summer and fall of 1968, most armed Red Guard factions were broken up and their adherents brutally suppressed by the army, and the movement itself ceased to count politically. Although so-called "congresses" of Red Guards were subsequently established in major urban centers theoretically to provide youth a voice in local affairs, such organizations were controlled and manipulated by the authorities. Moreover, the membership of the congresses apparently consisted largely of those factionalists supporting the civil and military leaders who eventually emerged triumphant in the Cultural Revolution; for those Red Guards who backed their opponents a worse fate was in store.

Large numbers of chronic troublemakers and the rank and file of factions that wound up on the losing side were shipped off to army-run labor camps; many of their leaders were tried by drumhead courts and sentenced to death. Although the numbers killed were never disclosed, some inkling of the extent of the executions was revealed in the summer of 1968 when hundreds of bodies of militant factionalists from Kwangsi Province were found floating down the river to Hong Kong, trussed up like lambs going to slaughter.

Not all former Red Guards suffered so mean a fate. Some of their representatives have been introduced into leadership posts in local government and party apparatus. Some leaders of the movement have even been elevated to the party's Central Committee, which was deliberately expanded after the Cultural Revolution to make room for Mao's "revolutionary successors." It should be noted, however, that many of these ex-Red Guards were not students at all but rather lower echelon "activist" bureaucrats from the former party and government apparatus. But, despite their rise to higher positions, they are unlikely ever to be capable of serving as much more than political tools for more powerful elements in the establishment.

The initial Draconian measures taken against the majority of the Red Guards were reinforced by other programs aimed at curbing disorders and reducing the opportunities for former factionalists to kick up their heels again. The nation's colleges and universities, which were still occupied by unemployed students, were taken over by worker propaganda teams backed by armed soldiers. This combination moved swiftly to restore a semblance of order among a population of quarrelsome student bodies whose numbers had not diminished because of the near freeze on promotions and job assignments from 1966 to 1968.

The most comprehensive measure employed to solve the problems of restless youth, however, was forcible emigration to the countryside. By the fall of 1968, the government had determined to send 90 percent of the middle school and university students of the classes of 1966, 1967, and 1968 (later extended to 1969) to army-run labor camps, state farms in remote border regions, rural construction projects, or agricultural communes. This program solved the dilemma in several ways. It provided order-oriented local officials with a means for punishing recalcitrant factionalists and for disposing of the many students who had returned to the cities during the Cultural Revolution. It helped ease pressures on the limited urban job market by getting rid of a huge backlog of unemployed students and underemployed young workers. It also complemented the regime's renewed efforts to improve rural development by injecting an educated labor force

that could help apply modern technology to agricultural production, overcome rural illiteracy, raise rural health standards, and reduce the discrepancies between the advanced urban centers and the vast backward peasant communities. Finally, the program served the long-standing utopian end of developing Mao's "revolutionary successors" by teaching them how to work and identify with the masses they supposedly would eventually lead. The old promise of revolutionary succession had a hollow ring, however, because many of the youthful emigrés were told they would have to spend the rest of their lives in the countryside. Few youths welcomed the prospect of once again serving as "volunteer idiots" for a regime that had used and then discarded them so hypocritically in the Cultural Revolution.

Life on the Farm

The rustication of China's students was only one aspect of an over-all program that since August 1968 has probably sent upwards of 20 million city residents to the countryside. Nevertheless, the impact of the back-to-the-country movement has been greatest on middle school, college, and university students, who constitute perhaps over one half of all those transferred. From the fragmentary evidence available, the program appears to have had a devastatingly negative impact on the morale of the youths; the process of adjustment to their new fate is likely to cause painful headaches for China's overburdened local administrators for some time to come.

That the youth of China are shocked and dismayed at the cruel turn of events in the wake of the Cultural Revolution is not surprising. In 1966 they were told that they could expect to inherit the earth. In 1970 they find themselves tilling it instead. Most find the transition difficult and degrading. Although some students are fortunate enough to land back in their home villages, most are deposited purposely in unfamiliar and frequently hostile surroundings.

The anger and frustration of the youths is more than matched by that of their involuntary hosts. To the peasants, the "assignees" are an unwanted burden, more mouths to feed. The peasants often reserve the hardest tasks for their state-appointed guests. Some undoubtedly derive a special sense of power and satisfaction in being able to pile the workload on the crass students who arrive on the farms exuding an air of superiority. Official editorial comment on the problem shows that peasants frequently rationalize their attitude on the ground that "in farming work, intellectual youths have many impractical ideas, and it is difficult enough just to teach them how to carry or lift loads on their shoulders or with their hands."

Over the past year, the regime has been pushing local officials to make better use of the students' education and aptitudes, and there clearly has been progress in this direction. Some students have assumed lower level leadership positions, and efforts have been made in a few areas to groom more leaders by admitting youths into nascent Young Communist League branches. Still other youths are supposed to open primary schools and conduct part-time study sessions for adults or for students who cannot be spared from labor during the day. In addition, many of the students sent to the countryside are being trained as "barefoot doctors." Finally, some students who originally came from rural areas have been used to open agricultural research stations.

The vast majority of youths, however, probably are still serving as ordinary field laborers who, at best, are merely accepting their fate with sullen resignation. Indeed, there is ample testimony to this in the number of complaints in regime propaganda about the students' apathetic attitude toward accepting re-education from the peasants and their preoccupation with "becoming officials." In recent months, Peking has frequently admonished rural authorities to pay more attention to organizing the production activities of their youthful charges and to be more active in helping them solve their problems. As a result of

such pressures from above, commune authorities reportedly are assigning special personnel to handle youth work, and top officials from urban areas are being sent to check on how their young emigrés are faring in the villages.

Despite intensified efforts by the regime to rationalize the youth resettlement program, problems are not confined merely to the rural areas and continue to mount. Although the bulk of the college classes of 1966 through 1968 have been resettled and universities are beginning to reopen, Peking apparently plans to continue assigning a majority of urban middle-school graduates to rural labor for periods of two to three years or longer. Some of these graduates reportedly are resisting emigration actively and, as a result, urban authorities have been forced to employ increasingly harsh measures, such as arresting the youths' parents, to meet rural assignment quotas.

Meanwhile, the substantial number of dissatisfied youths who continue to return illegally from the countryside is causing increasing concern to security officials in many cities. Because these returnees no longer have urban residency permits, ration cards, or access to legitimate employment, they are forced to turn to criminal activities to eke out a living. The extent of this problem is difficult to determine, but some idea is provided by the numerous mass trials held throughout China since last January. These dealt with a wide range of social, economic, and political offenses in a further effort to restore the civil discipline and control so badly undermined by the Cultural Revolution. The large number of common criminals placed on trial and the high incidence of crimes cited such as robbery, pickpocketing, forgery, and prostitution are unusual in China, suggesting that many of the offenders are illegal returnees from the countryside who have unexpectedly turned from "revolutionary successors" into juvenile delinquents.

Crisis of Authority

The difficulties that local authorities have been having with youths in both town and countryside point up an interesting paradox; despite the severe repression of former Red Guards and even though the majority of young people probably accept their post - Cultural Revolution fate with sullen resignation, there is an unusually high incidence of youthful indiscipline in China today. This is reflected not only in reports of criminal acts but also in editorial comment on quarreling between rural assignees and their peasant mentors, "anarchism" among young factory workers, and even indiscipline in the ranks of the army. Pre-teen and teen-age youths have been reported staging street rallies, arguing in public with policemen, and haranguing adult passers-by. Such behavior was unknown before the Cultural Revolution and although it is not allowed to get out of hand today, young people apparently now feel more license to engage in give and take with the authorities.

Part of the reason for this unusual phenomenon lies in an inherent contradiction in the regime's approach to young people. While on the one hand it has authorized cruelly suppressive measures to restore social discipline, on the other it instructs officials to recognize that the disillusionment of today's youth is a severe and trying hurdle that should primarily be overcome through political re-education and persuasion. There is therefore a gray area in which local authorities must move cautiously, allowing greater latitude for open, although nonviolent, expression of some concerns and grievances.

Another explanation for the marked changes in the attitude of youth toward authority lies in what transpired during the Cultural Revolution itself. By using young activists as the spearhead of their attack on their party and government opponents, the Maoists brought into existence mass organizations whose sole purpose was opposition to recognized authority. Once having been allowed to challenge the legitimacy of the establishment, it is not easy for former Red Guards to accept the dictates of the power holders who have emerged from the Cultural Revolution. This problem is made all the more acute because many veteran civil and military officials have been

returned to power who were the targets of Red Guard attacks, and the former young activists apparently feel they have been victimized by a cruel hypocrisy.

Finally, the Cultural Revolution introduced into the fabric of national life many sharply etched antagonisms and divisions that have dramatically affected the actions and outlook of the politically conscious young. The quarrels over power and policy between competing Red Guards and between them and their bureaucratic opponents, as well as divisions over the future direction of China's revolution, have had an enormous carry-over effect and are present at every level where youth confronts authority. This phenomenon is likely to make it increasingly difficult for the regime to reconcile its authoritarian tendencies in running the state and in modernizing the country on the one hand and its desire—in part ideological, in part politically practical—to maintain revolutionary momentum and to convince the younger generation that its interests are still identical with those of the regime on the other.

Bleak Present, Uncertain Future

The traumatic impact of the Cultural Revolution on China's youth and the variety of repressive actions taken by the regime afterward might easily have been anticipated. Their fair hopes blasted, students and other young people on the whole are now probably the most alienated, apathetic, and unhappy segment of the Chinese populace. Within the past year the regime has taken some action on problems that concerned the students before the Cultural Revolution, but the "solutions" have the old familiar ring. For example, efforts have been made to assign jobs to some former university students who have escaped rural resettlement; these, however, often are still not always commensurate with the skill levels of the employees. Efforts are apparently being made in some cities to give middle-school graduates of 1969 the opportunity to choose urban factory assignments over rural resettlement; still it appears that the choice is given only to a fortunate few while the majority are expected to "volunteer" for labor in the countryside. Finally, universities have begun to reopen this fall after a four-year hiatus, but admission criteria have a heavy political bias. The criteria do contain a number of loopholes that could allow students who have been rusticated since 1968 an opportunity to renew their education, but the returns are not yet in on how many this would involve or the quality of the academic training they will receive. In any case, Peking's most recent commentary on enrollment policy suggests that a large percentage of the students in the college classes of 1967, 1968, and 1969, who have already been labeled "graduates" by the regime, will have "to find outlets for their talents in the countryside" rather than in the universities.

As to the future prospects of this year's middle-school graduates, some localities apparently have held examinations to determine the best academically qualified for university admission. The regime, however, maintains that most of those who will matriculate in the future must have performed several years of manual labor and have the proper worker-peasant - class background. Such criteria may be eventually modified if it appears that they are preventing the matriculation of a student body capable of undertaking scientific research and other professional training in addition to the heavier doses of political and vocational courses that Mao has ordered the universities to offer. Nevertheless, future college students are likely to be more mature than in the past and fewer in number, inasmuch as the present rustication program seems designed to exclude a sizable percentage of those who graduated from middle schools during the Cultural Revolution.

Ultimately, the disillusionment of Chinese students with the outcome of the Cultural Revolution could redound to the advantage of a more moderate and pragmatic leadership in the post-Mao era. There is no sign, however, that the general malaise of China's youth will translate itself into any serious obstacle to the continued

stability of the regime or even a significant turning away from Communism's idealized political and social goals. There is no organized student opposition in China today, and all indications are that in the future "student power" will again be carefully channeled into party-directed activities. To help ensure this, the former Young Communist League is apparently being reconstituted along much the same lines as before to prevent youthful elements from striking out on a path independent of the party.

In all likelihood, China's youth will continue to remain rather docile and malleable, at least by Western standards. As an interest group their needs and demands will probably continue to be formulated and articulated from above rather than below. As individuals they will attempt to alleviate some of the harshness and severity of their existence without risking much direct conflict with the system. They are, after all, products of a society that has long been skilled in the tactics of "seeming to comply, while secretly disobeying." In any case, their fate lies not in their hands but in those of the military and party figures who eventually seized the levers of power in the Cultural Revolution. Any changes in the immediate future in Communist China will be wrought by these men and not by today's "revolutionary successors."

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